



Customer Focus

John Roozen grew up with his four brothers and five sisters on the western Washington Farm that his parents established in the early 1950's. The maritime climate and rich bottomland were perfectly suited to growing tulip, daffodils, and iris. The farm prospered selling beautiful cut flowers and bulbs worldwide.

A large pioneer family farm of tremendously fertile Skagit Valley ground near the Roozen's was recently split up and sold. One of these fields directly bordered John's property. The same family had farmed this land since the turn of the century, but suddenly the prospect of highly productive farmland being turned into a residential lot became a possibility.

By utilizing Skagit County's Farmland Legacy Program, John was able to purchase the adjoining 33-acre field and join it with his farm to assure that it would remain productive forever.

Skagit County's Farmland Legacy Program was established locally by a vote of the people. While substantial local funds have been allocated to the program, matching funds provided under the federal Farmland Protection Program has greatly enhanced the effort. The program is strictly voluntary but provides a means for farmers to keep good land in agricultural production.

John says "It's satisfying to me to have this land remain in agriculture. It is such good land, the best of the best, that it would be a real shame to have it converted to other uses."

Farmland Protection Program Washington Summary

Overview

The USDA Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS provides up to 50% of the easement cost to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. Proposals were accepted in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

Accomplishments

Washington State has awarded over \$1.2 million in FPP funds to 19 farms to purchase over 1,400 acres of farmland. To date, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, through the Farmland Protection Program has entered into cooperative agreements to protect valuable farmland with King and Skagit Counties. In fiscal year 2001, Washington State alone requested over \$2.3 million to protect 1,300 acres of farmland. Of this total, the State of Washington received \$564,800 to protect nearly 500 acres of prime agricultural land.

Outlook

The Willamette and Puget Sound Valleys are in the top five of the Nation's most threatened areas, according to the American Farmland Trust (1997). Made up of forest and cropland, the area is undergoing extensive urbanization, particularly around the metropolitan Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton areas. King County in Washington was ranked sixth in the United States in the number of new private housing units authorized by building permits between 1990 and 1992. Despite urbanization pressure, the outlook for purchasing development rights to preserve prime agricultural lands within the State looks promising. To date, over 35 governmental agencies or nongovernmental organizations have formed in Washington to prevent the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses.



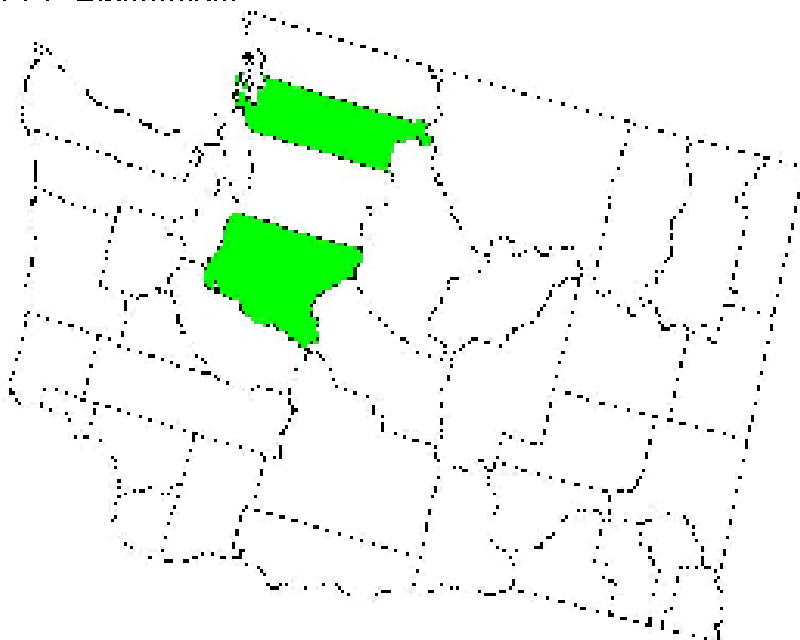
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Washington Farmland
Photo by:
Tim McCabe, NRCS

Washington

FFP Easements



Counties with both acquired and pending FFP acreage



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Map Scale: 1:100,000

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Farmland Protection Program Washington Easements (As of December 2001)

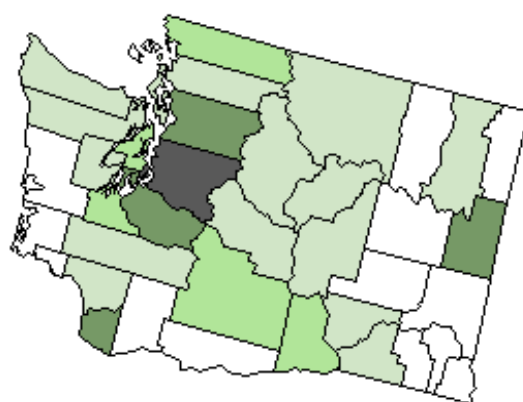
County: King
Acres: 170
Total Easement Cost:
\$1,665,172
Average per acre: \$9,795
Federal payment amount:
\$460,000
Percentage: 28%

County: Skagit
Acres: 1,261
Total Easement Cost:
\$1,649,081
Average per acre: \$1,308
Federal payment amount:
\$754,800
Percentage: 46%

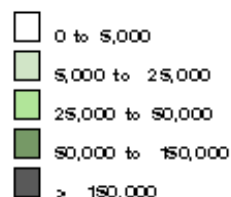
Washington Totals:
Acres: 1,431
Total Easement Costs:
\$3,314,253
Average per acre: \$2,316
Federal payment amount:
\$1,214,800
Percentage: 37%

Difference in Population between 1990 and 2000

Washington



Change in Population



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population 2000

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